Banned Books List 2025

Banned Books
The State of Book Bans

Lisa Tolin February 4, 2025

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What books are banned in 2025? Thousands of titles have been removed from public schools across the country.

PEN America has documented nearly 16,000 book bans in public schools nationwide since 2021, a number not seen since the Red Scare McCarthy era of the 1950s. This censorship is being mobilized by conservative groups— and has spread to nearly every state— and predominantly targets books about race and racism or individuals of color and also books on LGBTQ+ topics as well those for older readers that have sexual references or discuss sexual violence.

In the 2023-2024 school year, PEN America found more than 10,000 book bans affecting more than 4,000 unique titles, with about 45% of the bans occurring in Florida and 36% in Iowa. The most banned books in the 2023-2024 school year, according to the PEN America Index of School Book Bans, include bestselling novelist Jodi Picoult's *Nineteen Minutes*, about the moments leading up to a school shooting, and John Green's *Looking for Alaska*. The list also includes *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood, and *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini.

For more on what kinds of bans are happening and where, read Banned in the U.S.A.: Beyond the Shelves.

Most Banned Books of the 2023-2024 School Year

1. *Nineteen Minutes*, by Jodi Picoult, 98 bans

"Jodi Picoult, bestselling author of *My Sister's Keeper* and *Small Great Things* pens her most riveting book yet, with a startling and poignant story about the devastating aftermath of a small-town tragedy."

- Award-winning author

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2. *Looking for Alaska*, by John Green, 97 bans

"*Looking for Alaska* brilliantly chronicles the indelible impact one life can have on another. A modern classic, this stunning debut marked bestselling author John Green's arrival as a groundbreaking new voice in contemporary fiction."

- Michael L. Printz Award winner
- New York Times bestseller
- NPR's Top Ten Best-Ever Teen Novels
- TIME magazine's 100 Best Young Adult Novels of All Time
- TV miniseries

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3. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky, 85 bans

"Read the cult-favorite coming-of-age story that takes a sometimes heartbreaking, often hysterical, and always honest look at high school in all its glory."

- New York Times bestseller
- American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults and Best Book for Reluctant Readers
- Major motion picture

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4. *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick, 85 bans

"The powerful, poignant, bestselling National Book Award Finalist gives voice to a young girl robbed of her childhood yet determined to find the strength to triumph."

- National Book Award finalist

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5 (tie). *Thirteen Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher, 76 bans

"You can't stop the future.
You can't rewind the past.
The only way to learn the secret . . . is to press play."

- New York Times bestseller
- Netflix movie

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5 (tie). *Crank (Crank Series)*, by Ellen Hopkins, 76 bans

"Kristina Snow is the perfect daughter: gifted high school junior, quiet, never any trouble. Then, Kristina meets the monster: crank. And what begins as a wild, ecstatic ride turns into a struggle through hell for her mind, her soul–her life."

- No. 1 New York Times bestseller

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7. *Identical*, by Ellen Hopkins, 74 bans

"Beneath their perfect family façade, twin sisters struggle alone with impossible circumstances and their own demons until they finally learn to fight for each other."

- New York Times bestselling author

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8. *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini, 73 bans

"The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history."

- No. 1 New York Times bestselling novel
- New York Times Readers Pick: "100 Best Books of the 21st Century"

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9. *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood, 67 bans

In the near future, Offred is a handmaid in an authoritarian society who is not permitted to read. We'll let that sink in.

- Modern classic
- Award-winning author

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10 (tie). *Water for Elephants*, by Sara Gruen, 66 bans

With more than 10,000 copies in print, this bestselling novel was the basis of a movie and a Broadway show.

- No. 1 New York Times Bestseller

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10 (tie). *Tricks*, by Ellen Hopkins, 66 bans

"Five troubled teenagers fall into prostitution as they search for freedom, safety, community, family, and love in this No. 1 New York Times bestselling novel from Ellen Hopkins."

- New York Times bestseller

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More Books Banned in 50 or More School Districts in the 2023-2024 School Year

- *A Court of Thorns and Roses* by Sarah J. Maas
- *Empire of Storms* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Mist and Fury* by Sarah J. Maas
- *A Court of Wings and Ruin* by Sarah J. Maas
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- *A Court of Frost and Starlight* by Sarah J. Maas

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- See the full 2023-2024 Index of School Book Bans
- See the most banned books in the 2022-2023 school year
- See the most banned books in the 2021-2022 school year

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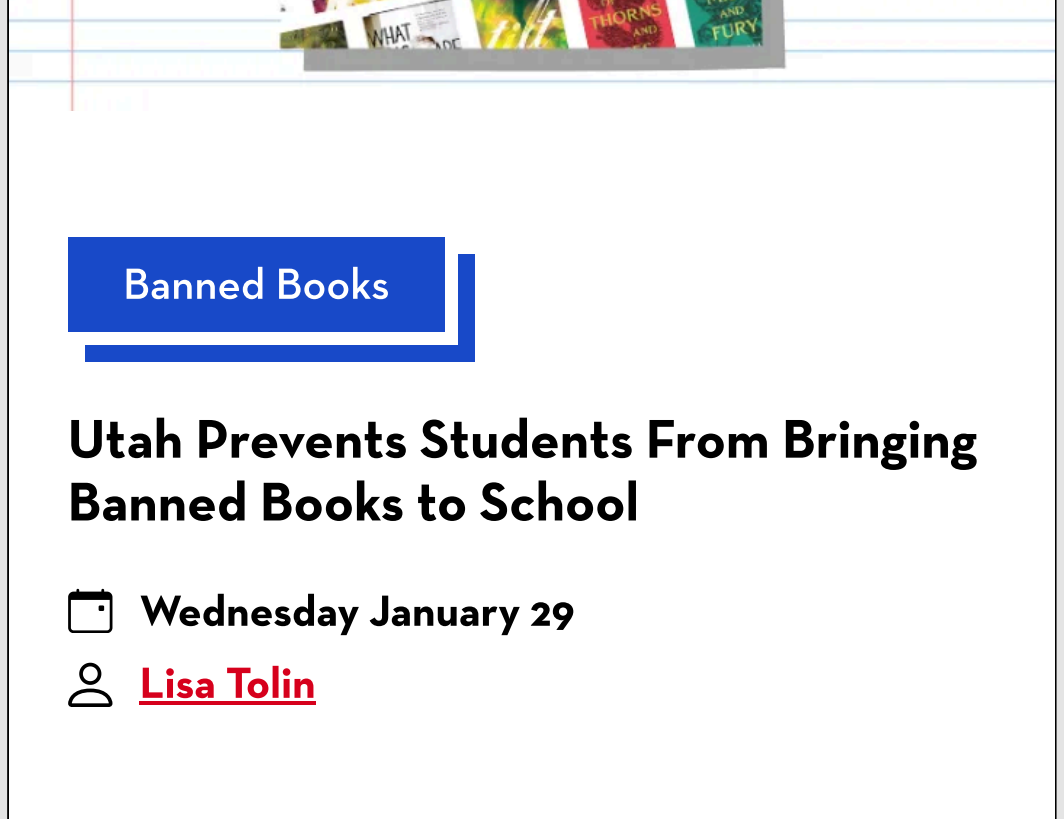

Banned Books

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